

**Whoever pays the piper calls the tune:**  
**Kurt Jooss, Public Subsidy, and Private Patronage**

*Abstract*

This article discusses how subsidy and patronage from German municipalities, private individuals, and British organisations supported Kurt Jooss's artistic output enabling him to create new work, to have high production values, and to present and disseminate his work in Britain, across Europe, the USA and South America. Working chronologically consideration is given to how each sponsor and benefactor impacted on Jooss's work, particularly his activities as a theatre/opera director and as a choreographer for Baroque operas and oratorios. It is concluded that without such deliberate sponsorship Jooss's work would have been severely restricted.

Kurt Jooss's work with the Ballets Jooss companies, as a choreographer, dancer and artistic director, is well documented and researched, as is the historical context in which he worked, but the economic circumstances in which he created his work seem to have been neglected. His several dance companies are an excellent example of how 'dance companies are born, flourish and die in a larger historical and economic context than an aesthetic account alone can narrate'.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout his career Jooss's work was underwritten by public subsidy and private patronage. This situation - whereby the creation, production, presentation and dissemination of art is deliberately sponsored, directly or indirectly, by an individual or a city/institution<sup>2</sup> - was as true of his work as an actor and as a theatre and opera director, which this article highlights, as it was of his work for the Ballets Jooss. Such patronage and subsidy was not without consequence for the individuals and institutions who invested in Jooss and his work,

while for Jooss a chronological study reveals that this patronage and subsidy led him to experience not only the peaks of great personal success and professional prestige but also the troughs of artistic frustration and financial disaster.

Jooss was born into a land-owning (so it might be supposed relatively well-off) farming family in the west of Germany. He remembered that music and drama were a part of family life<sup>3</sup> so his interest in theatre and opera is not perhaps so surprising. He recalled being engrossed in piano practice and his intention of studying music at the Stuttgart Academy of Music with the idea of becoming a singer, but a chance meeting with Rudolf Laban led him to the world of dance.<sup>4</sup>

Laban gave Jooss a way of thinking about dance which involved exploring dynamics and rhythm ('Eukinetics'), and the body in space ('Choreutics'), which became the roots of all Jooss's work. He experienced Laban as a teacher and as a choreographer, seeing Laban put his theories into practice with the *Tanzbühne Laban*. Laban's dance works showed great imagination and mastery of group movement ranging widely in subject matter, scale, style and accompaniment.<sup>5</sup> Jooss then learned much from Laban in theory and practice. He also experienced how to live from hand to mouth as Laban never understood how to manage his finances with [lack of] money a perpetual issue.<sup>6</sup> Jooss was subsidised by family money at this time while the inheritance from his father disappeared in the galloping inflation of the early 1920s.<sup>7</sup>

Jooss became disillusioned with Laban – he was jealous of the women surrounding Laban (particularly of Dussia Bereska, who took responsibility for the group when Laban was away) and made very unhappy by Laban saying to him: 'You are spoiling every sound idea which I

ever had.’<sup>8</sup> Jooss’ desire to leave Laban coincided with an invitation to work with Hans Niedecken-Gebhardt, artistic director of the theatre of Münster, whose productions of Handel’s operas and oratorios reflected a surge of interest in the composer’s work in Germany.<sup>9</sup> Niedecken-Gebhardt was already established as a stage director of some repute<sup>10</sup> with movement an integral part of his productions. He recognised that he needed a movement specialist, able to work in his progressive style, so he hired Jooss as ‘movement regisseur’ to assist with opera and drama performances.<sup>11</sup> Thus Jooss was not only arranging dances but also had supervision of the ways in which actors and singers presented themselves on the stage.<sup>12</sup> Given that Niedecken-Gebhardt used over 700 singers and a ‘movement choir’ of 100 for a production of *Alexander Balus* in 1926<sup>13</sup> one can see why Jooss might have been required.

This employment at Münster was Jooss’s first engagement in the professional theatre. He experienced first-hand the advantages of indirect city/municipal subsidy – around *Reichsmark* 699,000 in 1926 for the theatre, opera and dance companies<sup>14</sup> - when, in addition to his work in the theatre, Jooss was permitted to create his own dance group, the *Neue Tanzbühne*, with dancers from the theatre who included Sigurd Leeder and Aino Siimola (from the defunct *Tanzbühne Laban*). With Frederick Cohen (composer/conductor), Hein Heckroth (designer), Leeder and Siimola Jooss had around him for the first time the creative team who were to work with him for the next two decades.

At this point then Jooss’s work with his dance company existed alongside his work in the theatre each equally important; according to Jooss, in the following three years he and the *Neue Tanzbühne* ‘made a name for ourselves in Germany [...] [while] the Münster theatre [...] became famous through its powerful productions.’<sup>15</sup> Evidence of the latter is seen in an

English review of the Münster production of Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* in 1926: 'it was the best performance of *Dido* that I for one have seen. One's hat is raised to the manager Niedecken-Gebhardt, and to the ballet-master Kurt-Joos [sic].'<sup>16</sup>

Undoubtedly this was a very important time in Jooss's development not only as a choreographer but in becoming immersed in theatre practice. His post-Laban career began in the period of post-war economic recovery following the economic ruin of World War 1. Culturally it was a most fertile time allowing all the arts to flourish with many subsidised theatres, run by cities, municipalities and states, able to employ musicians, singers, designers and directors for theatre and opera productions.<sup>17</sup> Jooss was but one of many choreographers employed to work in opera who were able to form dance companies which performed both at the theatres in which the dancers were employed and elsewhere. This was public subsidy supporting the creation, production and performance of, in Jooss's case, quite avant-garde theatre and dance as evidenced in reviews and photographs of the productions.

Nonetheless Jooss decided to move on, possibly because of Niedecken-Gebhardt's move to Berlin and a general change in management but also because Jooss thought Münster was 'too conservative,'<sup>18</sup> with his artistic independence was being stifled. However if Niedecken-Gebhardt's and Jooss's work had become too avant-garde there may have been good reason for the City of Münster to make the change in management – having given support and opportunities to them both, the City may have felt that it, and the audiences, were being taken in a direction they neither desired nor had foreseen.<sup>19</sup>

In 1927 the City of Essen founded the Folkwangschule für Musik, Tanz und Sprechkunst and welcomed Rolf Schulz-Dornburg, Jooss and Heckroth as co-founders with Jooss as director

of the dance department. Cohen, Leeder and Siimola were employed by the Essen opera as well as joining *Folkwang-Tanztheater Studio* (Jooss' new company founded in 1928) with Leeder also teaching at the school. This company became the permanent ensemble of the Essen opera and toured as the *Folkwang-Tanzbühne*. Once again Jooss had his creative team around him and now had a school to train dancers for his company. This enabled Jooss and Leeder to develop the ideas and theories of Rudolf Laban, to draw on their other individual dance experiences and their years of experience working in Münster, channelling these influences into what they called 'Dance Theatre' the 'form and technique of dramatic choreography, concerned closely with libretto, music and above all with the interpretive artists.'<sup>20</sup>

Alongside these developments in his career as a dancer and choreographer Jooss maintained his interest in the theatre, for example we know that he travelled to Berlin (1928) specifically to see the first production of Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*<sup>21</sup> and that he appeared in Kaiser's *Europa*, playing the dancer-actor role of Zeus/the Bull, at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus in early 1931. Later that year he directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Waldtheater, Essen and played the role of Bottom. Jooss must have felt himself to be in a wonderful position, for this subsidy, '500,000 marks per year',<sup>22</sup> enabled him to dance, choreograph, act and direct.

In 1930 Jooss worked with Laban on Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in its first production at Bayreuth since its original performances in 1891. Financed by public appeal, the money raised, (127,000 marks) left 'Siegfried [Wagner] independent of the arch-conservative Wagner societies and free to stage the work as he pleased'.<sup>23</sup> This publically sponsored, independent production allowed Laban and Jooss freedom to choreograph dance that had not been seen at

Bayreuth before (some saw it as orgiastic, others as chaste gymnastics)<sup>24</sup> and useful public exposure in the world of opera. In the way that working with Niedecken-Gebhardt on opera and oratorio had provided Jooss with a way to leave Laban – there had been bad feeling on both sides at Jooss's departure – working on Wagner's opera together provided an opportunity for reconciliation between them.

This period (late 1920s-early 1930s) was crucial not only in Jooss's development as a choreographer, paving the way for his masterpiece *The Green Table*, but also in developing him as a man of the theatre absorbing those influences around him. It was however a time of increasing economic retraction and galloping inflation, making opera productions with the expense of soloists, conductor and orchestra very difficult.<sup>25</sup> It was not ideal circumstances in which theatre and dance could flourish either; Jooss felt this particularly at the end of 1931 when he was invited to compete in *Le grand concours de chorégraphie* organised by Rolf de Maré and *Les Archives Internationales de la Danse* in Paris. He was unable to register for the competition as:

new difficulties from the city of Essen again harshly crossed my most beautiful plans.

Now I am stuck again and don't know how to finance the project [...] I am still hopeful of some private people [...] but [...] one cannot know whether begging will have even a glimpse of success.<sup>26</sup>

The money came from somewhere, possibly from the dance critic Joseph Lewitan,<sup>27</sup> because Jooss's ballet *The Green Table* won the competition bringing Jooss and his *Folkwang-Tanzbühne*, and so the munificence of the city of Essen, to exposure outside of Germany for it was attended by companies from all over Europe and widely reported in the dance press. He and his company returned to Essen giving several performances of the ballet there; in

November they premiered *Big City* and *A Ball in Old Vienna*. These, together with *Pavane on the Death of an Infanta* (1929) and *The Green Table* completed what has become known as Jooss's signature programme.<sup>28</sup>

1933 saw the company begin the year touring in Holland and Belgium, just as Hitler became Chancellor; the Nazification of culture began to impact on Jooss, his company and his work. In March, Cohen, the company's Musical Director/composer, and two other Jewish company members were discharged from employment at the theatre by the City of Essen<sup>29</sup> - those who paid the piper had called the tune. Jooss must have been under great pressure to cease to employ Cohen and the two dancers in his company but he made a very strong stand against this causing him to be at odds with those who subsidised his work. One reason Jooss was able to make this moral stand was because he had already separated his company from the theatre (and thus from the City of Essen). The consequence of this was that Jooss no longer had the City's support for his work nor could the company perform in Essen,<sup>30</sup> but Essen no longer had the now prestigious dance company under its control.

Under private management with the impresarios Leon Greanin and Arnold Meckel, Jooss was able to keep the company together – after which it was known as Ballets Jooss. For the first time Jooss was without public subsidy needing to 'earn a living in the variable financial atmosphere of the commercial theatre'.<sup>31</sup> In the spring of 1933 the Ballets Jooss had a season in Paris, toured in Switzerland and had their first season in London. On returning to Essen the consequences of Jooss's 'inclination to Judaism'<sup>32</sup> began to impact – with such ideological differences Jooss found, like many other artists, that he could no longer live or work under the Nazi regime for his personal beliefs were contrary to all that Nazism propagated. As a direct consequence of increasing political pressure and activity, Jooss and his company left

Germany for Holland in secret.<sup>33</sup> They went to New York, performing to great acclaim, but after several months of touring back in Europe the company disbanded, unable to remain self-sufficient, the first of Jooss's companies to flourish and then die because of the economic and political climate.

It was fortunate then that Jooss was engaged by Ida Rubenstein to choreograph *Perséphone* (commissioned from Stravinsky) and in which she was to feature, for performances at the Paris Opera in April 1934.<sup>34</sup> Jooss may have been without a company and in need of finance and/or artistic activity but he was quite a celebrity; it must have been rather a cachet for Rubenstein to have secured the services of the prize-winning choreographer whose work had been so well received in Paris, Europe and the USA.

This was Jooss's first experience of private patronage; it appears not to have been a happy one for Jooss - any more than it was for the composer, director or designer.<sup>35</sup> Dancers Keith Lester<sup>36</sup> and Margaret Severn<sup>37</sup> both report that the rehearsal period was difficult - the dancers, selected by Rubenstein, were unused to Jooss's dance language or ways of working. In addition Rubenstein demanded to be the centre of attention with no solos for other members of the cast and by requiring the dancers to be 'almost always kneeling, bowing, curtsying or falling prostate before [her]'.<sup>38</sup> When the star of the work is paying for everything she can make any demands she likes, including having the final say on the choreography and staging.

The production was widely reviewed but little attention was given to the dance with critics focussing on Rubenstein's performance and Stravinsky's music.<sup>39</sup> With the creation, production and presentation of his work only partly in his hands, the positives Jooss could



take from the experience were the opportunities to work with Stravinsky and with Jacques Copeau, one of France's most highly regarded directors. Interestingly, as Tamara Levitz points out, Jooss did not talk about the experience of working with Rubenstein in any of the interviews he gave later in life, suggesting the experience was not what he had anticipated so was something he chose to forget.

At this perilous time in Jooss's career the importance of Beryl de Zoete, in acting as intermediary between Jooss and Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst (owners of Dartington Hall in Devon where a utopian experiment in rural regeneration, education and creative endeavour was underway) cannot be overstated; it is largely thanks to her that Jooss found himself in unique professional and personal circumstances at Dartington. She had introduced them when his company performed in London in June 1933 and through her they met again in Paris in early 1934. Jooss then visited Dartington, where he convinced the Dartington Trust to take him and students from the Essen school into their midst.<sup>40</sup>

By the summer of 1934 Jooss and his family, Leeder, four other teachers and twenty-three students were based at Dartington. The coming together of Jooss and the Elmhirsts was 'a combination of fortunate circumstances on both sides. Jooss desperately needed a refuge for himself and his group; the Elmhirsts [...] were looking for an artist of international standing and experience, with a coherent philosophy of dance'.<sup>41</sup> Before long there was a plan, for in the Report to The Dartington Trust, dated July 14<sup>th</sup> 1934, it states:

It is proposed to work with the Jooss-Leeder School for twelve months with a view to forming a troupe at the end of that period which will accompany Herr Jooss on his world tour [...] It is suggested that the troupe be formed at

Dartington [...] and that the style under which the troupe performs be 'Ballets Jooss' with a sub-title 'Dartington Dance Theatre'. The troupe would have its headquarters at Dartington.<sup>42</sup>

There were some legal issues as the company was still under contract to Meckel and Greanin but by September 1935 the Ballets Jooss was re-founded. Thanks to the generosity of the Dartington Trust Jooss was able to bring six dancers formerly associated with his group to form the nucleus of the company, and had asked for a new studio and dressing rooms<sup>43</sup> - clearly supporting the dance group was to be no light undertaking.

At Dartington Jooss and his creative team (Siimola, Leeder, Heckroth and Cohen), the students at the Jooss-Leeder School and the Ballets Jooss dancers found themselves in an ideal situation, for the arts were well established with a ready-made artistic community.<sup>44</sup> They were living and working in idyllic surroundings – a 4000 acre estate, the Barn Theatre for performances and excellent accommodation for staff and students. This included a purpose built house for Jooss and his family<sup>45</sup> and a large house on the edge of nearby Totnes for company dancers and students at the school. The Dartington Trust then appears to have been a generous patron with such investment suggesting that some importance was attached to the support of Jooss's work. In fact the situation was more complex than this for while the Dartington Trust took care of the school and the company, Jooss had the private patronage of Dorothy Elmhirst - that she was of personal significance to Jooss and his family is without doubt, demonstrated in the many letters which passed between them and the financial support she gave to them from her own significant resources for many years.

Dartington gave Jooss space and time to create new work and the Trust funded the production and presentation costs as well as the salaries of all concerned. Jooss, in return – through the quality of his work and the performances of it by the Ballets Jooss across the USA, Canada and Europe (during 1935-1939) – disseminated the Dartington ethos so helping to give Dartington an international reputation as a centre for the arts, education and rural regeneration; tours in England helped to confirm Jooss's place, and that of his company, in the British performing arts world of the 1930s.<sup>46</sup> It was a prolific period for Jooss during which he re-worked some of his old ballets and created several more. Two of these new works demonstrated Jooss's continued political stance: *The Mirror* (1935) in which Jooss attempted to show the problems of peace in the aftermath of war, principally that of unemployment (very topical in Britain in the early 1930s); and *Chronica* (1939) a satire on dictatorship, and a blatant comment on the political situation of the time.

Despite such challenging themes The Dartington Trust does not seem to have interfered with the artistic aspects of Jooss's work, for the Trust's reports show that they were more concerned with the financial viability of the company. It was important that Jooss balanced his established ballets with new works, attracting and cultivating audiences who, in attending performances, helped to finance the company. Production costs were kept to a minimum with the ballets, performed against black curtains with simple costumes and two pianos for accompaniment, created for a company of eighteen dancers. Dorothy Elmhirst however, privately at least, was concerned with artistic matters and frequently received from her friends reports or opinions of Jooss's choreography and work.<sup>47</sup>

Everyone at Dartington could not have failed to be aware of the political situation in Europe. The fear/threat of war meant that opportunities for the Ballets Jooss to tour in Europe

declined and fewer students from Central and Eastern Europe came to the Jooss-Leeder School. This resulted in a decreased income from the School and fewer potential dancers for the company, both of which were crucial in supporting the work of the Ballets Jooss.

Work continued however and Jooss's interest in music and opera was reignited briefly when he collaborated with the conductor Hans Oppenheim on a production of Handel's rarely performed opera *Rodelinda*. There were mixed reviews of the performances at the Old Vic in London and those at the Barn Theatre,<sup>48</sup> all of which were in the midst of a Ballets Jooss national tour. This could not have been ideal for the dancers but there may have been some sense of obligation to support other artistic ventures from Dartington in return for all the support Jooss, the school and the company had received - another example of those who pay the piper calling the tune perhaps. Jooss may have felt this particularly as Oppenheim had come to Dartington at his instigation.<sup>49</sup>

In the worsening political situation of 1939 the Trust worked on a scheme 'whereby the Ballets [Jooss] can be formed into a limited company and put upon its own feet.'<sup>50</sup> Later it was reported that during the autumn tour of 1939 the company had managed to support itself for, with the outbreak of war, the company continued touring until in December 1939 they left for a tour of the US, negotiated before the war started, with Cohen as director.<sup>51</sup> Jooss did not go with them 'on the grounds that he wished to remain in and with England in its struggle against the Nazis'.<sup>52</sup> Despite his good intentions Jooss, and Leeder, and some sixty or so other artists at Dartington, were classed as 'enemy aliens' and interned, Jooss at Huyton (Liverpool) and Leeder at Hutchinsons (Isle of Man).

Having an influential patron clearly had benefits for it is clear that Dorothy Elmhirst played a part in getting Jooss released<sup>53</sup> in November 1940, but neither Jooss nor Leeder could return to Dartington as it was inside a military zone. They moved to Cambridge from where they tried to continue with the school for a few months, financed by £200 from the Dartington Trust;<sup>54</sup> this however seems to have been the last of any subsidy from them. Jooss clearly felt that he had not been well treated for he wrote that he had not been told what had happened to his house and all its contents (it was occupied by American forces) and that he had been packed off with just a month's salary;<sup>55</sup> it was the end of his dealings with the Dartington Trust.<sup>56</sup>

To the Dartington Trust Jooss's departure may have been of little consequence at a time when the outbreak of war was of far more importance than one individual. For Jooss the loss of the Dartington Trust support was profound; professionally he had nothing, no company (as they were still touring in the US) and no school, while personally he had very little either with no home and no income. How fortunate then that Alice Roughton,<sup>57</sup> a somewhat eccentric medical doctor and psychiatrist well known for her humanitarian beliefs, came to his rescue. Her support seems to have been entirely philanthropic, without any demands made of Jooss, allowing him, his family and later his dancers to stay in her house and supporting his efforts to find work.<sup>58</sup>

Jooss's aim was to join the Ballets Jooss in America. By mid-1942 however there was no company for him to go to<sup>59</sup> thus Jooss welcomed the invitation to direct *The Magic Flute* for Sadler's Wells Opera Company at the Cambridge Arts Theatre.<sup>60</sup> The production was partly funded by the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) – whose aim was 'to foster the arts through state support [...] and to boost morale [...] through taking

classical music, visual art, [dance] and drama of the highest standards to isolated rural areas and industrial towns'.<sup>61</sup> It was well received first in Cambridge and then in London.<sup>62</sup> Dent noted that Jooss's work with the company, drawing on his experience as movement regisseur, choreographer, dancer and teacher, was of great value to the company.<sup>63</sup>

This production had an unexpected outcome for the British Government offered to those members of the Ballets Jooss, still in America, who wished to re-join Jooss, single passages across the Atlantic.<sup>64</sup> This was undoubtedly instigated by Maynard Keynes who 'acting in his capacity as Chairman of CEMA and no doubt with the aid of his contacts at the Treasury, [...] set to work to prevent the disintegration of this famous international ballet company'.<sup>65</sup> However it seems neither the CEMA nor the treasury had the means to pay the passages home for Dorothy Elmhirst was appealed to: 'I want to ask you frankly do you think the Dartington Trustees will pay the bill?'<sup>66</sup>

Clearly the funds were found for in August 1942 the Ballets Jooss was able to re-form, based in Cambridge. Jooss described the set-up:

We will build a new "Ballets Jooss" as a full sized company together with the restaging of the old repertoire in its main items and make some new ballets and hope to start performing in January [...] Finances will come from CEMA and Cambridge friends. [...] We shall be a non-profit making company and [...] virtually independent.<sup>67</sup>

Those last words sound as if Jooss needed to be free and self-governing; to all intents and purposes this appears to have been the case for the company although publically financed was

mostly autonomous.<sup>68</sup> It was not quite as simple as this as again there were some legal issues – this time over ownership of the ballets and responsibility for the debts of the previous company.<sup>69</sup> These were remedied as the company, with a repertoire of Jooss's signature programme, his pre-war ballets and, later, new works soon began touring extensively in the UK, taking the work to factories and canteens in places unused to dance performances thus actively fulfilling the CEMA's aims. In addition towards the end of 1942, Jooss directed *The Marriage of Figaro* for Sadler's Wells Opera Company which, on the whole, appears to have been a great success.<sup>70</sup> After two years of artistic frustration and personal anguish Jooss must have felt some relief, glad that his services were at last of use to his adopted country.

By the end of WW2 Jooss's company was touring under the auspices of the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) performing to British troupes in Belgium, Germany and Holland; performances for civilian audiences continued in Paris, Scandinavia, the USA and Canada. However, in the post-war economic climate, with dance companies such as Sadler's Wells Ballet and Ballet Rambert vying for the newly-formed Arts Council's money, support for the Ballets Jooss could not be sustained; the company was forced to disband after a British tour in August 1947. To whom could Jooss turn? Dorothy Elmhirst received a letter outlining the dire financial straits Jooss and the company were in: 'The Arts Council severed their ties with us on account of our touring abroad [...] (Our debts with them are still unpaid.) Alice Roughton's financial position has become such that she cannot face to take responsibility for the situation.'<sup>71</sup> From her reply to Jooss it seems that Mrs Elmhirst would not help either to cover the debts.<sup>72</sup> However some six months or so later - no doubt in response to a letter from Jooss - she offered £15 per week to cover his personal expenses.<sup>73</sup>

Once again Jooss was without a company, without his trusted collaborators,<sup>74</sup> with no artistic outlet and probably no income. It is possible to interpret this next stage of Jooss's career as a period of economic migration, that is, he went where he could find employment and an outlet for his artistic needs. First he went to Chile where former Ballets Jooss dancers had settled, establishing what was to become the state-funded Chilean National Ballet, staging his signature programme and creating a new work *Juventud* (1948). Next Jooss made what surely must have been a momentous decision – to accept the invitation from the City of Essen to return to direct the dance department at the Folkwangschule with the condition that he had an independent Dance Theatre company, as in 1932.

Two years later, as promised, under the patronage of the city, a company - The *Folkwang Tanztheater der Stadt Essen* - was established. The City financed the staging of the repertoire of the Ballets Jooss, and the creation, production and presentation of new works - *Dithyrambus* (1951) *Colombine* (1951) *Night Train* (1952) and *Journey in the Fog* (1952) - of which only the latter had a contentious theme, that of 'man's suffering and insecurity in post-war times.'<sup>75</sup> The company toured the UK and Europe, received very good reviews, and was described as 'Germany's premier ballet company'.<sup>76</sup> However in 1953 the city of Essen withdrew its financial support of the company (although Jooss remained teaching at the Folkwangschule). Some people thought there were political reasons behind this turn of events: 'The lack of understanding between the returning refugee and those who had remained in the country was deep and harder to overcome than anticipated,'<sup>77</sup> although Jooss, despite the frustration, was convinced the withdrawal of funding was only for financial reasons, rather than on political or artistic grounds.<sup>78</sup>



Yet again Jooss found himself without a company and without state subsidy or private patronage for his creative work; some months later however he became ballet director of the Düsseldorf Opera with the prospect of establishing a company there.<sup>79</sup> Working with the opera dancers Jooss produced and choreographed Stravinsky's *Perséphone* in 1955 and Carl Orff's stage work *Catulli Carmina* (1956). He also staged his dance works for the opera dancers – including a new version of his 1939 *The Prodigal Son*, but no new works - which were performed at designated ballet evenings, much as had happened at Münster in the late 1920s. Regrettably Jooss had joined the Düsseldorf Opera at a difficult time with the opera house being re-built and with a change of directorship; Jooss resigned when plans for his dance company were cancelled (1956).

Whether this was for financial, political or artistic reasons where did this leave Jooss? Since his return to Germany both the cities of Essen and Düsseldorf had promised much and then reneged on those promises of financial support for his company; yet another example for Jooss of those who were paying the piper calling the tune. From a financial perspective he was fortunate to have his teaching role at the Folkwangschule; once again the world of opera came to his rescue when he found an artistic opening in the Schwetzingen Festival,<sup>80</sup> for whom he was to choreograph several baroque operas. After the artistic frustrations of the preceding years it must have been rewarding that the production in 1959 of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* was successful and revived for several seasons following the initial production.<sup>81</sup> Further work at Schwetzingen included productions of Rameau's opera *Castor and Pollux* in 1962 and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in 1966.<sup>82</sup>

In the early 1960s Jooss's attention also seems to have been given to the 'Master Classes for Dance' programme at the Folkwangschule which, with state subsidies, gave young dancers

the opportunity for advanced study and exposure to professional works staged by established choreographers such as Lucas Hoving and, of course, Jooss.<sup>83</sup> In performance the group was known as the *Folkwangballett* and they performed at many festivals in Europe as well as dancing in Jooss's operas at Schwetzingen. These performances of course drew attention to the City of Essen and to the Folkwangschule as a leading training centre for dance. More importantly for Jooss perhaps in 1964 *The Green Table* was performed for the first time by a non-Jooss trained company in Munich, so proving to Jooss that the ballet had a life of its own outside the confines of his own company, and could generate him an income; it was the first step towards the dance world acknowledging the status of the ballet and of Jooss as a master choreographer.<sup>84</sup>

Jooss left the Folkwangschule in 1968 leaving him free to work and travel as he pleased. He was soon working on a production of Cavaliere's *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* for the Salzburg Festival with Herbert Graf<sup>85</sup> which was described as 'perfect theatre';<sup>86</sup> Jooss considered this 'his last significant work'.<sup>87</sup> They worked together again in Geneva, in 1972 on Handel's oratorio *Belshazzar*, which 'If not exactly an aural feast it was certainly a visual one [...] at the height of the orgy there must have been 100 performers on stage'.<sup>88</sup>

Manipulating this number of performers must have taken great organisation and considerable skill from Jooss but perhaps not more so than similar demands made of him in that 1926 production of *Alexander Balus*. A year later Jooss worked for the final time with Graf on a production of Handel's oratorio *Acis and Galatea*, as part of the Salzburg Festival; it was the last choreography on which Jooss worked. Perhaps there was a sense of closure, of having come full circle, from his time in Münster in the 1920s working on those pioneering opera and oratorio productions to working in Austria, Switzerland and Germany during the 1960s

and '70s on productions of those same operas and oratorios for new audiences in significantly different times.

Jooss's professional life took place then in a hugely changing social, economic and political environment which impacted on his work (with the various incarnations of the Ballets Jooss and his work in opera/oratorio) and on the individuals and institutions which supported him: Münster was too conservative for Jooss; with the City of Essen he had ideological differences; at Dartington it was the political situation, outside of his or the Trust's control, which caused the problems; with ENSA it was financial difficulties; in Essen and Dusseldorf it was economic and possibly political issues which instigated his adversities. Lest it be thought that Jooss had no part to play in all the difficulties he experienced perhaps it is appropriate to note that Anna Markard described her father as 'uncompromising and difficult'<sup>89</sup> which may of course have had some impact on his dealings with all his sponsors and benefactors. This may also help to explain how, throughout his career, Jooss seems to have maintained artistic independence, creating work that he needed/wanted to make without reference to those who supported him; the one exception to this – the work with Ida Rubenstein where all his artistic decisions were influenced by her – he chose to dismiss from his recollections.

Throughout his career public subsidy and private patronage led Jooss to experience the peaks of great personal success and professional prestige which of course reflected positively on those who supported him; the troughs of financial disaster and artistic frustration, which Jooss also experienced as the support came and went, were not their concern. Nonetheless it is these benefactors, whether institutions or individuals, who were attracted to Jooss's work and who then encouraged him by giving him time and space to create, and significant

financial support to produce, present and disseminate the work, to whom he must have felt most indebted. Perhaps the gratitude that he felt to all who had paid the piper was expressed to Dorothy Elmhirst: 'I want to finish this letter by thanking you for having enabled us to live, to struggle and to endeavour again towards a beautiful goal [...] I do hope we did not waste time or means in doing so.'<sup>90</sup>

## NOTES

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1. Sally Banes, 'Where they Danced: patrons, institutions, spaces.' *Dance Chronicle* Vol. 25, no.1 (2002): 95. In all Jooss led some seven companies: Neue Tanzbühne (Münster) Folkwang-Tanztheater Studio (Essen); Folkwang-Tanzbühne (Essen); three incarnations of the Ballets Jooss - 1932-33 (Essen), 1934-42 (Dartington), 1942-47 Cambridge); and Folkwang-Tanztheater der Stadt Essen (1951-53) (Ballets Jooss in all but name). Dancers moved from one company to the next sharing Jooss's vision for dance theatre, his movement language and working process, and creating/ preserving his repertoire.
  2. Judith Higgins Balfe, *Paying the Piper: Causes and Consequences of Art Patronage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
  3. Kurt Jooss, Transcript of a tape-recorded interview with Ruth Foster, 16 April 1973.
  4. Kurt Jooss, *Mein bisheriger Lebenslauf* quoted in Anna Markard and Hermann Markard, *Jooss* (Cologne: Ballett-Buhnen-Verlag Rolfe Garske, 1985), p. 29.

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5. Sigurd Leeder, 'Rudolf Laban – an appreciation', *The Dancing Times*, Vol. 58, no. 594 (1958): 511.
  6. John Hodgson and Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban, an introduction to his work and influence* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990).
  7. Kurt Jooss, interview by John Hodgson, 1973, transcribed by Cat Harrison, edited by Dick McKaw, (unpublished).
  - 8 Jooss, Hodgson interview.
  9. Hans Redlich, 'Handel in our Time', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* Vol. 80, no. 1(1953): 87-99.
  10. Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910–1935* (California: California University Press, 1997). Niedecken-Gebhardt went on to be a famous director working for the Nazis on productions such as the opening ceremony of the Berlin Olympics in 1936.
  11. Isa Partsch-Bergsohn, *Modern Dance in Germany and the United States: Crosscurrents and Influences* (London: Harwood, 1994).
  12. A.V. Coton, *The New Ballet* (London: Denis Dobson, 1946).
  13. Pamela M. Potter, 'The Politicization of Handel and his Oratorios in the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the Early Years of The German Democratic Republic', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 85, no, 2 (2001): 311-341.
  14. Anselm Heinrich, *Entertainment, Propaganda, Education: regional theatre in Germany and Britain between 1918 and 1945* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007).
  15. Jooss quoted in Markard, *Jooss*, p. 35.
  16. 'Purcell's *Dido* in Germany', *Musical Times*, Vol. 67, no. 998 (1926): 317-318.

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17. Harold D. Rosenthal, 'Opera on the Continent', *Ballet and Opera*, Vol. 7, no. 3 (1949): 44-49.
18. Anna Markard (Jooss' daughter), conversation with author, 23 July 1991.
19. Higgins Balfe, *Paying the Piper*
20. Kurt Jooss, *Entwicklung meiner Arbeit in Stichworten* (1955) quoted in Markard *Jooss*:
39. For an exposition of Jooss' movement language see Jane Winearls, *Modern Dance – the Jooss-Leeder Method* (London: A & C Black, 1958).
21. Hermann Markard, conversation with author, 23 July 1991.
22. Fernau Hall, *Modern English Ballet* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1948).
23. Frederic Spotts, *Bayreuth: A History of the Wagner Festival* (Yale: University Press, 1949), p.150.
24. Spotts, *Bayreuth*
25. Artur Kutscher, 'The German Theatre', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, Vol. 17, no. 2 (1933): 123-130.
26. Kurt Jooss, letter to Joseph Lewitan, (founder and editor of *Der Tanz*) dated 26 April 1932 quoted in Markard, *Jooss*: 43.
27. Anna Markard, conversation with author, July 23rd, 1991.
28. Of the 50 or so ballets Jooss created these four ballets are his only extant work.
29. Kurt Jooss, Biographical note, 1975, quoted in Markard, *Jooss*: 53.
30. 'Kurt Jooss as Moses' Temple Dancer' quoted in Markard *Jooss*: 51.
31. Coton, *New Ballet*, p. 73.
32. Jooss, Hodgson interview.
33. Jooss, Hodgson interview.

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34. Rubenstein, a former dancer with Diaghilev, had her own money and the large fortune of her husband at her disposal.
35. Tamara Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
36. Keith Lester, 'Rubenstein Revisited', *Dance Research*, Vol. 1, no. 2 (1983): 21-31.
37. Margaret Severn, 'Dancing with Bronislava Nijinska and Ida Rubenstein', *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 11, no. 3(1988): 333-364.
38. Severn, 'Dancing with Nijinska', p. 358.
39. Franc L. Schueur, 1934. 'The Rubenstein Ballet', *The Dancing Times*, Vol. 24. No. 284 (1934): 244.
40. Kurt Jooss, Hodgson Interview.
41. Victor Bonham-Carter, *Dartington Hall – The history of an Experiment* (London: Phoenix House, 1958), p. 130.
42. The Dartington Hall Trust had grown from informal committees which oversaw the various activities on the estate. It was formally established in 1932 with a settlement of £1million from the Elmhursts (Michael Young, 1982. *The Elmhursts of Dartington* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982)).
43. Christopher Martin, *Report to the Dartington Trustees*, dated 14 July 1934 [T/AA/1/A/1].
44. Bonham-Carter, *Dartington Hall*.
45. 'Warren House', as it became known, had a beautiful view, an integral dance studio twenty-five feet long, two main bedrooms and rooms for the nurse and maid. It was designed to suit Jooss's needs by the Swiss architect William Lescaze  
<https://historicensland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1324962>

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46. Clare Lidbury, 'Kurt Jooss and Sigurd Leeder: Refugees, Battle and Aftermath', in Charmian Brinson and Richard Dove (eds.), *German-speaking Exiles in the Performing Arts in Great Britain from 1933* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 207-224.
47. For example see John Maynard Keynes, letter to Dorothy Elmhirst on *The Mirror*, Dartington Archive [DWE/G/6/E].
48. See for example 'Rodelinda at the Old Vic', *New Statesman*, 10 June 1939.
49. Peter Cox, *The Arts at Dartington 1940-1983* [private publication, 2001].
50. Christopher Martin, *Report to the Dartington Trustees* dated 8th May 1939 [T/AA/1/E/1].  
The Trust's liability to the company ceased automatically with the outbreak of war - see Christopher Martin, *Report to the Dartington Trustees* dated 9th February 1940 [T/AA/1/F/1].
51. Hall, *Modern English Ballet*.
52. Francois Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens*, (London: Penguin Books, 1940), p. 154.
53. Dorothy Elmhirst, letters to Ellen Wilkinson, dated 19 October 1940, and 11 November 1940, The Dartington Archive [DWE/S/2].
54. Christopher Martin, *Report to the Dartington Trustees* dated 7th February 1941, The Dartington Archive [T/AA/1/G/1]. The school closed later.
55. Kurt Jooss, letter to Dorothy Elmhirst, dated 13 March 1941, The Dartington Archive [DWE/A/8/B].
56. Whatever bad feelings Jooss may have had towards the Trust and the termination of its support, his feelings of gratitude to Dorothy Elmhirst for her financial and emotional support over many years were often expressed in his correspondence with her.



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57. John Gregory, 'Obituary: Alice Roughton', *The Independent*, 8 July 1995 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-dr-alice-roughton-1590408.html>
58. Joy Skinner, *Over the Hill with a Magic Carpet* (Haddenham: Fern House, 1999).
59. After touring across the US the company went to South America criss-crossing the continent for fourteen months giving over 300 hundred performances; they returned to New York for a season before finally disbanding.
60. Eric Crozier, 'After Long Pursuit', *Opera Quarterly*, Vol. 10, no. 3 (1994): 5-18.
61. Heinrich, *Entertainment*, p. 45.
62. See for example 'Sadler's Wells Opera: The Magic Flute', *The Times*, 8 April 1942.
63. Edward J. Dent, *A Theatre for Everyone – The story of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells* (London: T.V. Boardman and Co. Ltd. 1945).
64. Markard, *Jooss*.
65. Norman Higgins, *Cambridge Arts Theatre 1936-1968, a personal record* (London: Motley Books, 1969).
66. Mary Glasgow, secretary of CEMA, letter to Dorothy Elmhirst, dated 7 April 1942, The Dartington Archive [T/AD/1/A/22].
67. Kurt Jooss, letter 'to his old retainers' dated 8 July 1942, quoted in Skinner, *Over the Hill*, p. 43.
68. F. M. Leventhal, 'The Best for the Most' CEMA and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939-1945', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 1, no. 3 (1990): 289-317.
69. Skinner, *Over the Hill*. See also Christopher Martin, *Report to the Dartington Trustees*, dated 14 July 1934, The Dartington Archive [T/AA/1/A/1].

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70. See for example 'Sadler's Wells Opera: *The Marriage of Figaro*', *The Times*, 31 December 1942.
71. Kurt Jooss, letter to Dorothy Elmhirst, dated 31 July 1947, The Dartington Archive [DWE/A/8/B]. Jooss had departed from his normal practice of the music for his work being scored for two pianos - he states in this letter that the debt for the orchestration of the scores alone was in excess of £7000 (just under £200,000 today).
72. Dorothy Elmhirst, letter to Kurt Jooss, dated 21 August 1947, The Dartington Archive [DWE/A/8/B].
73. Dorothy Elmhirst, letter to Kurt Jooss, dated 23 March 1948, The Dartington Archive [DWE/A/8/B].
74. Fritz Cohen stayed in the USA after the Ballets Jooss disbanded in 1942; Heckroth was forging a career in the film world, creating Oscar winning designs for *The Red Shoes* (1948); Leeder established The Sigurd Leeder School of Dance, in London (1947); Siimola continued in her role as Jooss's Choreographic Assistant.
75. Markard, *Jooss*, p. 67.
76. J. Stewart Barker, 'Ballets Jooss, 1953', *Dance and Dancers*, (April 1953): 8-9.
77. Markard, *Jooss*, p. 9.
78. 'The Jooss Case as Judged Outside Germany' quoted in Markard, *Jooss*, p. 69.
79. Markard, *Jooss*.
80. A short summer festival founded in 1952.
81. See Rolf Steyer, 'Schwetzingen', *Opera - Summer Festivals* (Autumn 1969): 69. and A. V. Coton, 'Rave Notices for Purcell in Germany.' *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 February 1960.

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82. The latter appears to have been an adventurous production but not all together successful.
- See Kurt Honolka, 'Schwetzingen - *Dido and Aeneas*', *Opera - Summer Festivals*, (Autumn 1966): 91-92.
83. Markard, *Jooss*.
84. After 1964 Jooss saw his dance works mounted on companies all over the world; they have continued to be in the repertoire of companies in Europe and the USA. The City Center Joffrey Ballet was the first non-Jooss trained company to stage his complete signature programme (1976).
85. They knew each other from Münster when they were protégés of Niedecken-Gebhardt - J.M. Vives, '“Little Hans”: from his phobic episode to becoming an opera director', *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 93, no. 4 (2012): 863-874.
86. Derra de Moroda, 1968. 'Salzburg Festival', *The Dancing Times*, Vol. 49, no. 697 (1968): 25, 27.
87. Suzanne Walther, 'Kurt Jooss: the evolution of an artist', in Suzanne Walther (ed.), *The Dance Theatre of Kurt Jooss* (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993), p. 20.
88. Theodore Bloomfield, 'Our critics abroad: Switzerland: Eloquent *Jenufa*', *Opera*, Vol. 23, no. 7 (1972): 653.
89. Markard, *Jooss*, p. 9.
90. Kurt Jooss, letter to Dorothy Elmhirst, dated 26 July 1939, The Dartington Archive [DWE/A/8/B].

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